



**BECAUSE THE CROSS MATTERS  
BECAUSE THE MISSION MATTERS**

St. Paul's  
**2-Year  
Generosity  
Initiative**

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# BECAUSE IT MATTERS

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## What matters most to you?

The Apostle Paul's answer? "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

What mattered most to Paul? **Nothing except Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.**

Isn't that true of us here at St. Paul's and The Bridge? Nothing really matters except a person's eternal relationship with Jesus Christ who was crucified for them.

Our God continues to open up new opportunities to proclaim "nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified." To make the most of those opportunities, we are embarking on a two-year spiritual journey we are calling **Because it Matters**. Why? Because the cross matters to each of us. Because the mission matters to each of us.

As you participate in **Because it Matters**, the Holy Spirit will provide you with many opportunities to grow closer to Christ. May we all bow before Jesus' cross in humble faith, confident that he welcomes us into his presence and hears our prayers.

Because the mission matters, we challenge every ministry partner to recommit themselves to Jesus' mission. May we step out in faith with our hands lifted high in praise and in mission-expanding generosity.

What would it look like if everyone one of us at St. Paul's and The Bridge would choose to take a big step of faith and commit radically to **Because it Matters** generosity for the next two years? Join us in praying for 100% participation. Join us in praying for such a generous response that for generations to come, our spiritual children will look back and celebrate how we responded to our defining moment... **Because it Matters!**

Your partners in mission and ministry,

Pastor Panitzke

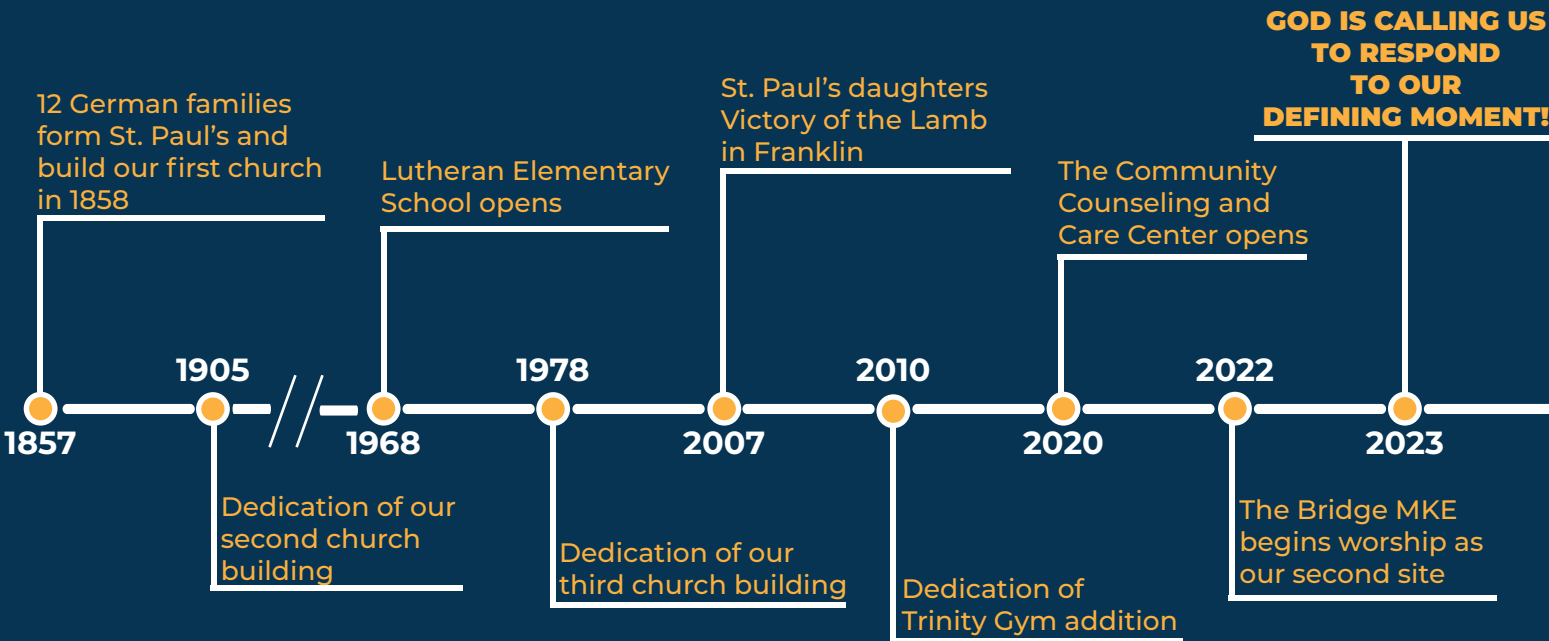
Pastor Kuehl

Pastor Bonack

Pastor Strobel

# DEFINING MOMENTS AT ST. PAUL'S

Each of these defining moments took courage and dedication. We look back in thanksgiving at what God accomplished through our mission-minded spiritual ancestors.



# DID YOU KNOW?

**324** children are enrolled in our Lutheran Elementary School

**122** children participated in our Kids Club program last year

Our daughter congregation Victory of the Lamb averages **422** people in attendance

The Bridge MKE averages **75** in attendance, a larger attendance than 50% of the congregations in our synod

St. Paul's has the **fourth** largest worship attendance in our synod

# LOOK BACK AND BE ENCOURAGED



Our Generous God has created us to be Generous People with a Generous Vision!

**Let us give thanks to God for what he has accomplished through us financially since our last building program in 2010.**

The \$3.3 million mortgage on the Trinity Gym/Café/Classroom addition paid off in November 2023, six years early.

An internal debt of over \$250,000 from a decade of operating deficits has been erased.



The Cool Million campaign provided \$1 million in special gifts to make significant improvements to our school and church buildings.

We have established a Capital Reserves Fund and an LES Stabilization Fund to prepare our congregation for future opportunities and challenges.

St. Paul's continues to be a leader in supporting our synod and high school.



Over the last two years, St. Paul's/The Bridge contributed \$5.7 million to support on-campus and off-campus mission and ministry.

**Could our generous God give us the strength for a time of special dedication? Could he enable us to nearly double our giving to \$10 million over the next two years?**

**Is this *our* defining moment?**

The **Because it Matters** generosity initiative includes our giving for our current ministry and missions and giving to enhance our facilities for gospel outreach.



**\$10 Million Over 2 Years**

## BECAUSE THE MISSION MATTERS

Over the next two years, **Because it Matters** will enable us to increase our support of synod mission work and the mission efforts of Wisconsin Lutheran High School. It will also provide \$50,000 for our mission partners and \$200,000 for ministry enhancements at The Bridge MKE.

**\$1 Million**

## BECAUSE THE MINISTRY MATTERS

Our gospel ministry impacts hundreds of people every single week. Over the next two years, **Because it Matters** will provide the \$2 million needed each year for our Mission and Ministry Fund to keep St. Paul's and The Bridge moving forward as a church and Christian school to bring more people closer to Christ.

**\$4 Million**

## BECAUSE THE FUTURE MATTERS

We want to prepare our facilities to serve generations to come. Proposed additions to our school and church will benefit every member of the St. Paul's family and bring our Muskego campus family together for worship, Kids Club, and Bible study in one facility. **Because it Matters** will provide \$5 million for facilities expansion.

**\$5 Million**

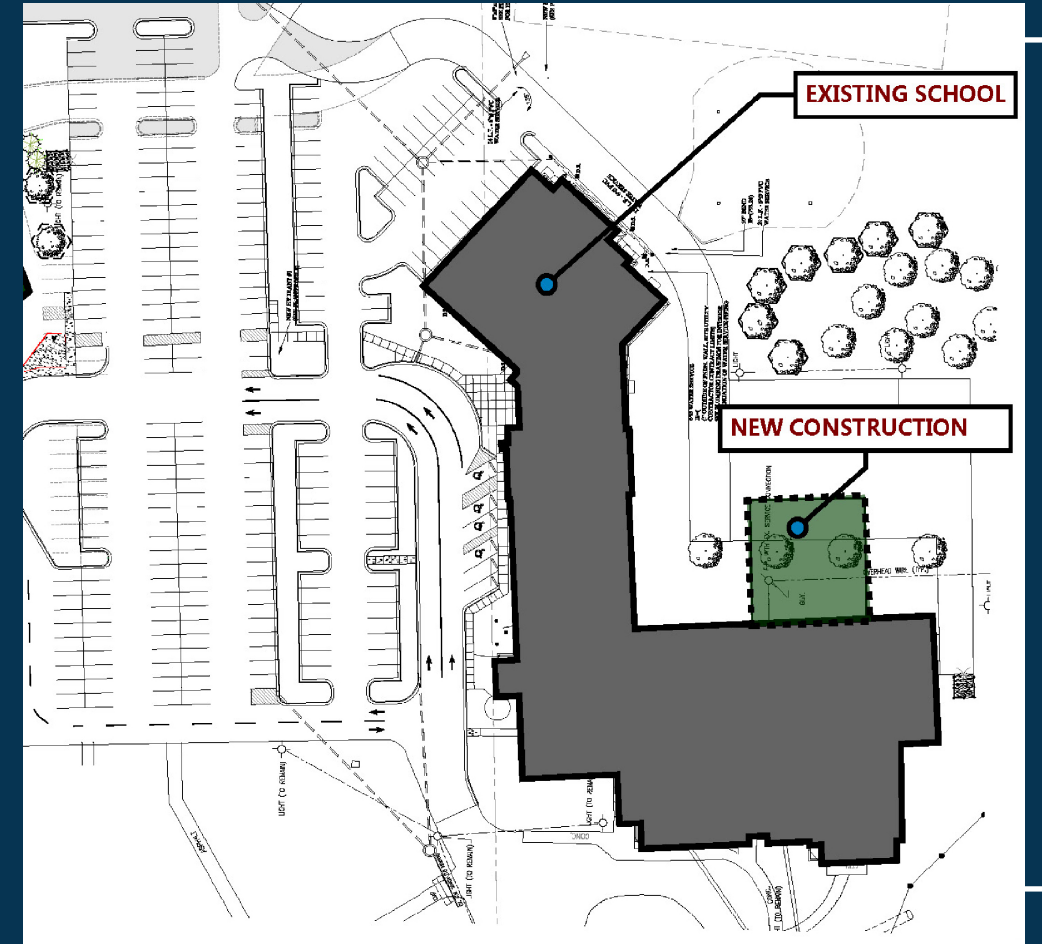
# BECAUSE OUR FUTURE MATTERS

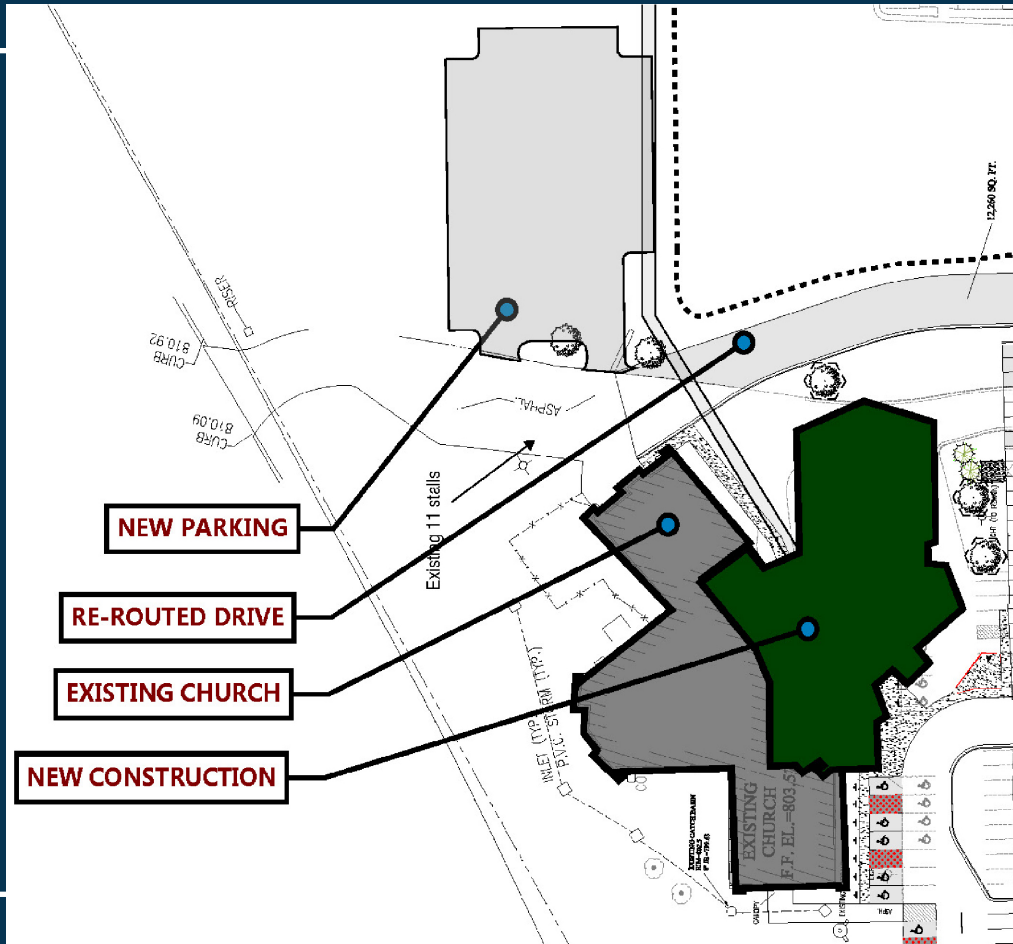
God is blessing our school with a growing enrollment. Every classroom is being used.

We want to help our students use all their talents. We have no classrooms designed for the teaching of special middle school industrial arts classes such as the current woodworking or small engine repair. We also have no dedicated space for music lessons and practice or choirs.

We are envisioning a four-classroom addition to our school to provide space to expand our curriculum and allow for enrollment growth.

## SCHOOL ADDITION





# BECAUSE OUR FUTURE MATTERS

Mission outreach is a core value. Expanded parking and a larger gathering/welcoming space will enable us to welcome new people to our Muskego campus.

Diversity of worship languages is our second core value. One third of our family worships at The Bridge every week. A permanent location for this worship language will enable us to continue to provide worship diversity. This new auditorium will also provide a large flexible space for multiple

uses throughout the week for all our congregation members and to serve our community.

The Family Church is another core value. To support families we will expand our child care facility and bring Sunday morning Kids Club into the same building in which parents worship.

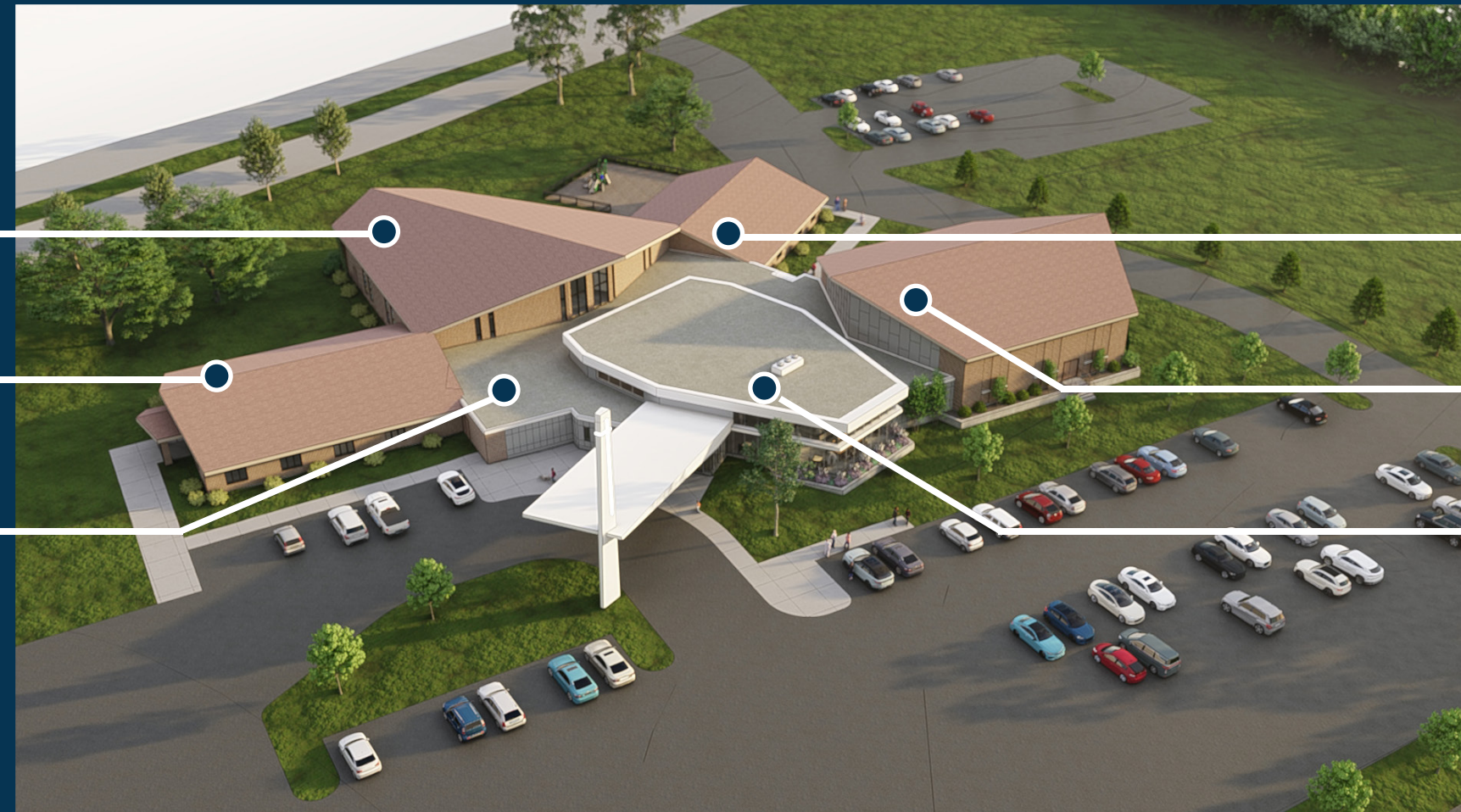
## CHURCH ADDITION

# BECAUSE OUR FUTURE MATTERS

Traditional Sanctuary

Community Counseling  
and Care Center

Kitchen



Child Care Center and Kids Club

Multi-Purpose Auditorium for  
The Bridge and other ministries

One Gathering Space to bring our  
worshipping family together

## CHURCH ADDITION



# BECAUSE OUR FUTURE MATTERS

## The Gathering Space will be the hub of ministry activity!

- **First Impressions:** Guests will feel welcome the moment they walk in the door for worship or activities throughout the week.
- **Family Friendly:** A play area, staffed nursery, and Kids Club all visible from the entrance of the Gathering Space will announce to parents that we are excited they are here.
- **Friendships Formed:** This bright and open area will invite those who worship in the traditional services and The Bridge to mingle and unite as one family of God.

## GATHERING SPACE



# BECAUSE OUR FUTURE MATTERS



## The cross matters to all of us.

A vision to help us live out our core values and bring the light of the cross to every person within our community.

- **Mission Outreach** – An inviting entrance to our worship spaces and more space for community programming, plus improvements to The Bridge MKE
- **Diversity of Worship Languages** – The family of God, enjoying different worship preferences, yet all worshipping in one facility on the Muskego campus
- **The Importance of Family** – Families with children remain in one facility for worship, Bible study and Kids Club, plus the school is expanding
- **Community and Care** – Facilities to encourage young and old to linger and connect as the family of God



## FACILITIES VISION

# BECAUSE MATTERS

## A One Commitment Initiative

**Because iT Matters** celebrates that our generous God has created us to be a generous people. Over the last two years we have given over \$5.7 million to support our ministry and our missions.

**Because iT Matters** also challenges us as the Apostle Paul challenged the Corinthians to “excel in the grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). To prepare our ministry for the future, can we grow our giving to \$10 million for the next two years?

You may have been part of church campaigns in the past that asked you to commit to a second gift “above and beyond” your usual gifts to make new buildings and ministries possible.

**Because iT Matters** is different. We are asking you to make just one commitment over the next two years that will fund our ministry, our mission, and our future vision. You will still be able to designate your gifts as you desire, but this one commitment will help us know the resources we will have for our future vision.

## SO HERE'S WHAT WE'RE ASKING OF YOU

# Next Steps

### PRAY

Pray that God works in and through the **Because iT Matters** generosity initiative. Pray that His mission is accomplished. Ask God to make clear your part in this vision.

### DISCUSS

Talk with your spouse, your family, and your small group about what this commitment will mean for the next season of your life.

### COMMIT

Please mark your calendars for Commitment Weekend, November 11-12 and prepare for a worship service that will be remembered as a defining moment for our congregation and for your own faith. We are asking you to make a sacrificial commitment to radical generosity – whatever it is that God leads you to do. Follow His leading – nothing more, nothing less. It is an awesome God that we serve. Let us trust that he can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

**Total Commitment: \$10 million over 2 years**

# BECAUSE MATTERS

## CHRISTIAN LIFE LADDER

The primary goal of **Because it Matters** is that **100%** of us grow in our faith.

May all of us join Paul in saying,  
“Nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified”  
(1 Corinthians 2:2).

FIVE

FOUR

THREE

TWO

ONE

### 5. MY LEGACY MATTERS

I understand that I can be a blessing to generations to come. I trust God’s promise to “show love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.” I make a commitment to invest in the next generation with my time, my prayers, my decisions, and my resources.

### 4. MY SURRENDER MATTERS

I understand that my life is no longer my own. I live for “nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” I surrender my hopes and dreams, my fears and pain, into the hands of my Savior. My comfort and desire is not most important. I make a commitment to pray, “Father, not my will, but yours be done.”

### 3. THE MISSION MATTERS

I understand my primary purpose in life is to share the good news of Jesus and his cross with everyone within my area of influence. I make a commitment to live and speak in a way that gives honor to Jesus and draws the people around me closer to him.

### 2. THE PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

I understand the importance of my church partners to help me grow in my faith. I make a commitment to regular worship and participation in Bible studies and/or small groups.

### 1. THE CROSS MATTERS

I have a personal understanding of my sin and trust that Jesus died on the cross for me. I am forgiven! I make a commitment to personal spiritual growth.

# BECAUSE MATTERS

## GENEROSITY LADDER

The secondary goal of **Because it Matters** is that **100%** of us seek to “excel in the grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). The Generosity Ladder corresponds to the Christian Life Ladder.

When “Nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified” becomes the theme of our lives, it also becomes the theme of our generosity.

FIVE

FOUR

THREE

TWO

ONE

### 5. THE LEGACY GIVER

Your faith in Jesus leads you to make financial decisions that can positively impact generations to come. You may be considering how you can make the largest gift you have ever made, knowing that children not yet born will benefit from your generosity. Setting a lifetime giving goal or making/updating your estate plan to make your generosity live on after you may be your next step to “excel in the grace of giving.”

### 4. THE SURRENDERED GIVER

Your faith in Jesus leads you to acknowledge that everything you have belongs to Jesus. Your focus changes from what you are giving to what you are not giving. You ask, “What is holding me back from giving more?” Life decisions and financial decisions begin to be made to enable you to be more generous. Deciding to give an appreciated asset may be your next step to “excel in the grace of giving.”

### 3. THE INTENTIONAL GIVER

Your faith in Jesus leads you to ask questions like, “Is my car payment or my mortgage more important to me than the mission Jesus has given me?” Deciding to give a percentage of your income or deciding to tithe (give 10% of your income) may be your next step to “excel in the grace of giving.”

### 2. THE CONSISTENT GIVER

Your faith in Jesus leads you to appreciate the partnership you have in God’s Church. You begin to give on a regular basis, weekly or monthly. Making a recurring online gift may be the next step to “excel in the grace of giving.”

### 1. THE INITIAL GIVER

Your faith in Jesus as your Savior moves you to give for the first time. Your gifts are an offering of praise to God for your salvation.

# Your Commitment

COMMITMENT  
WEEKEND  
NOVEMBER 11 - 12

## GIFT CHART

\$10 MILLION OVER TWO YEARS

GIFTS NEEDED	GIFT LEVEL	ANNUAL GIFT of	MONTHLY GIFT of	LEVEL TOTAL
1	\$1,500,000	\$750,000	\$62,500	\$1,500,000
1	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$41,667	\$1,000,000
2	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$20,833	\$1,000,000
4	\$250,000	\$125,000	\$10,417	\$1,000,000
6	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$6,250	\$900,000
7	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$4,167	\$700,000
8	\$75,000	\$37,500	\$3,125	\$600,000
15	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$750,000
20	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$1,042	\$500,000
30	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$625	\$450,000
75	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$417	\$750,000
100	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$208	\$500,000
Many	<\$2,500			\$350,000

Your total intention to give includes your current annual giving plus your expanded generosity to **Because it Matters** over a period of two years from January 2024 to December 2025.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ *What I/we normally give in a year*

+

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ *My/Our expanded annual generosity for Because it Matters*

=

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ x2 YEARS = \_\_\_\_\_

+

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Gifts from my/our stored resources*

↓

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

MY/OUR TWO-YEAR INTENTION TO GIVE TO THE BECAUSE IT MATTERS INITIATIVE.

January 2024 through December 2025

# BECAUSE IT MATTERS

## STUDY GUIDE

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

#### BY YOURSELF

Through the next five weeks, devote a few minutes every day to review your notes on the previous messages and to read the suggested verses in the GroupWork Bible study, reflecting on what you read and journaling in the space provided. Consider joining a short-term small group by stopping by our **Because it Matters** resource table.

#### WITH A GROUP

Being a partner with others in your Christian life is one of the most important aspects of spiritual growth. We hope you use the next five weeks to meet weekly with your small group. The weekly GroupWork section has been written to be used as part of a group. If you have never been in a small group before, this is a perfect time to join. To find a group, stop by our **Because it Matters** resource table or use the QR code.



# Week 1 - October 15

## Message Notes: The Cross Matters

## THE CROSS CHANGES AN ENEMY INTO A MISSIONARY

### Acts 9:1-19

“This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”  
“Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

I have a new identity.

I have a new purpose.

I have a new strength.

#### My Next Steps:

- Because the cross matters to you, be ready to share your story with others. On the next page, write down how the cross of Jesus has changed you. Tell your story to a friend or family member.
- Because the cross has changed you, pray and discuss with your family what God is placing on your heart as your response to the **Because it Matters** giving initiative.



# TELL YOUR STORY

When did the cross change you?

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How has the cross changed you?

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# Week 1: The Cross Matters

## GroupWork Discussion

**MAIN IDEA FOR THOUGHT**

There is no middle ground. Either the cross of Christ means everything to us, or it is a sign of the judgment to come. How is this either/or reflected in my Christian living and in my Christian giving?

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being “terrified” and 10 being “thrilled”), how do you feel as you begin this journey into the **Because IT Matters** giving initiative? Discuss with your group.

**Luke 23:39-43**

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

<sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

<sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

<sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

2. Describe how Jesus’ cross changed each of the criminals crucified with Jesus.

3. Share a time in your life when you understood for the first time or in a new way how Jesus’ cross changed your life.



### Titus 3:3-8

<sup>3</sup> At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup> This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

4. For many Christians, the cross changed us at our baptism. How do each of the following words help you appreciate your baptismal change?

- Washing (See Acts 22:16)
- Rebirth (See John 3:3-8)
- Renewal (See Ephesians 4:22-24)
- By the Holy Spirit (See 1 Corinthians 12:3)

5. Compare Titus 3:3 and 3:8. Describe the change Jesus' cross and baptism work in a believer.

### 1 Corinthians 2:2

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

6. Paul was certainly excited about "Jesus Christ and him crucified," but he was also filled with fear and trembling as he took up his missionary task. Look back at your first discussion question. The **Because it Matters** giving initiative is exciting for us too, but it also can fill us with fear and trembling. Discuss how our response to **Because it Matters** can demonstrate the Spirit's power at work in us.

7. How do you think your response to **Because it Matters** will impact those in your area of influence? How will they see God's power at work in you?

# Week 2 - October 22

## Message Notes: The Partnership Matters

## THE PARTNERSHIP IS FORGED BY A COMMON FAITH



### Philippians 1:1-11

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”

“God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.”

“This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.”

The partnership is strengthened by mutual love.

The partnership is united in prayer.

The partnership supports the mission.

#### My Next Steps:

- Who was the person most impactful to your faith life? Write a thank you note to that individual. If they are still alive, let them know the partnership continues as you pray for them.
- Because the partnership of the church matters to you, pray and discuss with your family what God is placing on your heart as your response to the **Because it Matters** giving initiative.

# Week 2: The Partnership Matters

## GroupWork Discussion

### MAIN IDEA FOR THOUGHT

God's church is designed to be a partnership. The church is only as strong as the partnership that exists among its members. How can **Because it Matters** strengthen our partnership?

1. What benefit do you receive from your partnership in the church? What do you give to others in this partnership?

#### Exodus 17:8-14

<sup>8</sup> The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

<sup>10</sup> So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. <sup>12</sup> When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it."

2. The victory over the Amalekites was the result of a partnership. What role did each of the following play in this partnership? What corresponding role might a Christian have today in our partnership within the church?

- |                  |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Moses         | My "Moses" role                  |
| b. Aaron and Hur | My "Aaron and Hur" role          |
| c. Joshua        | My "Joshua" role                 |
| d. The LORD      | The LORD's role in my my battles |

3. Notice the LORD wanted to be sure that Joshua remembered this partnership. How can the **Because it Matters** giving initiative help the next generation remember the LORD's partnership with us?

### Matthew 10:1-11

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

<sup>9</sup> “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— <sup>10</sup> no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. <sup>11</sup> Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.”

4. The commissioning of the Twelve demonstrates the partnership that exists within the church.
  - a. Jesus invited the disciples into the partnership, giving them authority (v.1). What similar authority has he given to us? (See John 20-21-23)

b. Because the disciples did not take money along for their journey, their hearers were invited into the partnership of the church by giving them support. In what way is the **Because it Matters** giving initiative an invitation to partnership...

- With others within our congregation?
- With our children and future generations?
- With people who do not yet know Jesus?

5. What excites you most about the partnership opportunities that **Because it Matters** gives to you?

# Week 3 - October 29

## Message Notes: The Mission Matters

# THE MISSION GOAL IS TO WIN AS MANY AS POSSIBLE



### 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

The mission makes us free people.

The mission makes us servants of all.

#### My Next Steps:

- Use the offering statement you received this week to determine what percentage of your income you are giving now. The calculator on the following page can assist you.
- Because the mission matters to you, put the **Because it Matters** commitment card someplace where you see it daily and can pause to pray about your response to this giving initiative. What does “by every possible means” look like for you? If married, discuss this with your spouse.

# THE MISSION MATTERS TO ME

When the cross matters to us and the mission matters to us, we will want to become more intentional in our giving. Deciding to give a percentage of our income or deciding to tithe (give 10% of your income) may be our next step to “excel in the grace of giving.” You may use the Giving Chart to help you determine what percentage you are giving to the Lord.

As you pray about the **Because it Matters** giving initiative...

What is your percentage-giving goal?

What is the dollar amount of that increase?

What life changes are you asking God to help you make so that this giving goal is attainable?

## GIVING CALCULATOR

My annual giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My current giving percentage from the giving chart \_\_\_\_\_%

My **Because it Matters** percentage giving goal \_\_\_\_\_%

Additional annual giving to achieve my goal? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Income	1%	3%	5%	7%	9%	Tithe 10%	12%	15%	20%
\$20,000	\$200	\$600	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$1,800	\$2,000	\$2,400	\$3,000	\$4,000
\$30,000	300	900	1,500	2,100	2,700	3,000	3,600	4,500	6,000
\$40,000	400	1,200	2,000	2,800	3,600	4,000	4,800	6,000	8,000
\$50,000	500	1,500	2,500	3,500	4,500	5,000	6,000	7,500	10,000
\$60,000	600	1,800	3,000	4,200	5,400	6,000	7,200	9,000	12,000
\$70,000	700	2,100	3,500	4,900	6,300	7,000	8,400	10,500	14,000
\$80,000	800	2,400	4,000	5,600	7,200	8,000	9,600	12,000	16,000
\$90,000	900	2,700	4,500	6,300	8,100	9,000	10,800	13,500	19,000
\$100,000	1,000	3,000	5,000	7,000	9,000	10,000	12,000	15,000	20,000
\$120,000	1,200	3,600	6,000	8,400	10,800	12,000	14,400	18,000	24,000
\$140,000	1,400	4,200	7,000	9,800	12,600	14,000	16,800	21,000	28,000
\$160,000	1,600	4,800	8,000	11,200	14,400	16,000	19,200	24,000	32,000
\$180,000	1,800	5,400	9,000	12,600	16,200	18,000	21,600	27,000	36,000

# Week 3: The Mission Matters

## GroupWork Discussion

### MAIN IDEA FOR THOUGHT

As we celebrate the Lutheran Reformation, we remember how much the cross and the mission of God's church mattered to Martin Luther and the other reformers. They were willing to risk their lives for the mission. What would it look like if I were willing to risk my life (or livelihood) for the mission presented to me in **Because it Matters**?

1. In his book *The Freedom of the Christian Man*, Martin Luther presented two contradictory statements:

- A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.
- A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

Look back at your notes from the message and discuss how both of these statements are true.

## Read Daniel 6

<sup>3</sup> Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup> At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent...

<sup>10</sup> Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

2. Daniel was committed to his mission to serve the LORD in his daily life. Even his enemies knew his faith meant everything to him. How can Christians today demonstrate their commitment to Christ's mission in a way that is evident to the people around them?

3. Daniel fulfilled his mission even though it may have cost him his life. How does his commitment to the mission inspire you to a higher level of Christian living and giving?

## Mark 10:35-45

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

<sup>36</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

<sup>37</sup> They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

<sup>38</sup> "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

<sup>39</sup> "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

<sup>41</sup> When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

4. James and John's desire for places of honor was not appropriate, but their willingness to drink the cup of suffering for the cross and the mission was admirable. As we pray about our response to the mission of **Because it Matters**, what might our willingness to drink the cup of suffering mean for us?

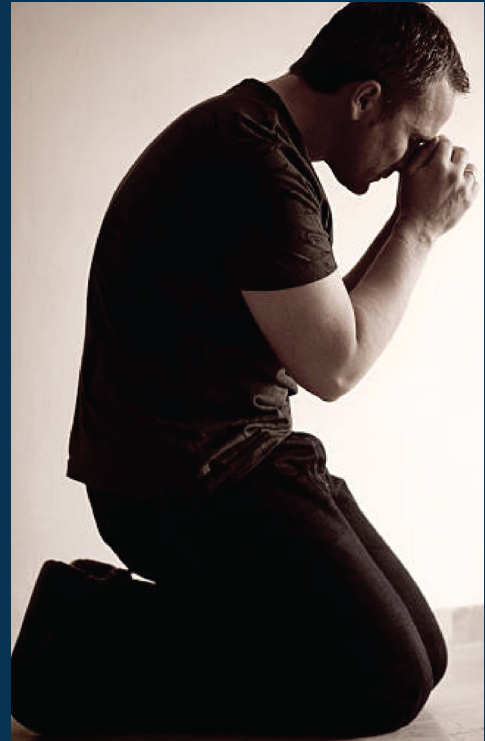
5. Jesus fulfilled his mission. He served us by giving his life as a ransom for us. Write a portion of your own obituary. "He/she fulfilled the mission Jesus gave him/her on earth. He/she served us by ... " What is one next step for you to make that mission dream a reality?

6. How does the **Because it Matters** giving initiative provide you with an opportunity to fulfill your mission and serve others?

# Week 4 - November 5

## Message Notes: My Surrender Matters

# MY SURRENDER ENABLES ME TO BE GENEROUS



### 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. Since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Jesus surrendered his wealth that we might gain everything.

The Macedonians' surrendered giving encouraged the Corinthians.

Surrendered giving begins with a surrendered life.

Surrendered giving strives to grow in the grace of giving.

#### My Next Steps:

- Who is your role model of surrendered giving? How do they inspire you? What is the next step for your giving to become more like theirs? Journal on the next page.
- Commitment Sunday is next week. Look daily at the **Because it Matters** commitment card. What does a “surrendered giving” response look for you? If married, discuss this and pray over it with your spouse.





## Read 1 Chronicles 29

<sup>2</sup> “With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God... <sup>5</sup> Now, who is willing to consecrate themselves to the LORD today?”

<sup>6</sup> Then the leaders of families ... gave willingly. <sup>9</sup> The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

<sup>14</sup> “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand... <sup>16</sup> LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.

<sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.

<sup>18</sup> LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.”

2. King David was a “surrendered giver,” acknowledging everything ultimately belongs to the LORD. King David’s generosity as a surrendered giver encouraged the generosity of the leaders. The leaders’ generosity encouraged the people. Whose giving in the past taught and encouraged you in your giving decisions?

3. Whom do you hope to encourage by your giving decisions?

4. What is the connection between surrendered giving and hearts that are loyal to Christ?

## Malachi 3:6-12

<sup>6</sup> “I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. <sup>7</sup> Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

<sup>8</sup> “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. <sup>11</sup> I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>12</sup> “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

5. In the Old Testament, God treated his people like little children, commanding them to tithe or give 10%. In the New Testament, God treats us like adult children, entrusting to us the difficult decision what percentage of our income best glorifies the God who died for us and rose again. Do we give less than the “little children” of the Old Testament or more since God treats us like adults? Discuss this challenge as a group.

6. How do the promises the LORD Almighty gave to the people of Malachi’s day encourage you to be a “surrendered giver”?

7. Pray for each other that each might understand what “the whole tithe” is for them as they consider their response to the **Because it Matters** giving initiative.

# Week 5 - November 12

## Message Notes: Joy Matters

## FIND THE JOY OF GIVING



### Philippians 4:10-20

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord  
that at last you renewed your concern for me.  
I have learned the secret  
of being content in any and every situation,  
whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.  
I have received ... the gifts you sent.  
They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice,  
pleasing to God.  
My God will meet all your needs  
according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Paul's joy and contentment

God's joy and contentment

The Philippians' joy and contentment

#### My Next Steps:

- If you haven't already returned your **Because it Matters** commitment card, ask yourself what amount would give you joy and contentment because the cross matters to you and the mission matters to you?
- For everyone: We are praying our December 3 celebration weekend will include the largest single weekend offering in St. Paul's / The Bridge history. What initial offering would give you joy and contentment?

# Week 5: My Joy Matters

## GroupWork Discussion

### MAIN IDEA FOR THOUGHT

Giving brings joy to the giver, joy to the recipient, and joy to our God as he sees his children live and act like him. What gives you joy as you think about your commitment to **Because it Matters** and as you pray about your initial gift on the December 3 Celebration Weekend?

1. What has excited you about the **Because it Matters** giving initiative? How have you been challenged to think in new and more godly ways about your offerings?

### 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

<sup>6</sup> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup> As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."

<sup>10</sup> Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

<sup>12</sup> This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. <sup>13</sup> Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. <sup>14</sup> And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. <sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2. From verses 6 – 8, pick out at least three lessons to remember as you seek to "excel in the grace of giving."

3. "Their righteousness endures forever" (9:9). This quotation from Psalm 112 promises that our righteousness, that is, our generosity to others, endures. How does it increase your joy in giving when you know that our Lord will always remember and appreciate your acts of righteousness?

4. Read again verses 12-15. How does it increase your joy in giving as you think about the many who will give thanks because of your generosity.

5. Our generous response to **Because it Matters** will provide many people with reasons to give thanks to God. Look back at pages 8 – 19. Imagine talking to people ten years from now about the results of **Because it Matters**. Pick two or three of the following groups of people. What blessing from the **Because it Matters** effort will lead them to give thanks to God for your generosity?

- a. Christian parents
- b. Children
- c. World missionaries
- d. A weekly worshipper in the Traditional Service
- e. A weekly worshipper at The Bridge Muskego
- f. A weekly worshipper at The Bridge MKE
- g. A community member

This is our joy:

**"In their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What is the timeline for the Because iT Matters vision?

We will spend the fall of 2023 sharing the vision with God's people to determine the resources God will provide for building expansion.

After our commitments are totaled in December 2023, we will make any changes necessary to our plans based on commitments and our ability to make mortgage payments.

In early 2024, we will develop final plans that will be presented to the congregation for approval. God willing, we will break ground in the fall of 2024 with construction completed late in 2025.

## How does this vision impact our entire St. Paul's/The Bridge family?

Our outreach efforts will be enhanced as our guests enter the Gathering Space and experience a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere.

The Gathering Space will also be a welcoming entrance for all our regular worshippers at the Muskego campus, a place where people connect before and after services over snacks and refreshments so that the bonds of Christian fellowship among members are strengthened.

Both worship languages will be blessed by having one staffed nursery and Kids Club in the same building as worship.

The new auditorium will provide a permanent location for The Bridge, relieving the stress of setting up hundreds of thousands of dollars of electronic equipment each week. A very large storage area for tables and chairs at the back of the auditorium will make this space flexible for a variety of uses by the congregation and community throughout the week.

All our youth will be blessed by additional classrooms for the school, by bringing Kids Club and worship into one building, and by providing a multi-use room off the Gathering Space where middle school and high school students can gather for activities outside of Sunday morning.

The Bridge MKE worshippers will benefit as \$200,000 of our mission commitment is designated for remodeling or ministry enhancements at The Bridge MKE campus.

## What is the financial goal of Because iT Matters?

Our current vision for facilities expansion is estimated to cost about \$10 million. The goal of **Because iT Matters** is 1) to generously fund our on-going ministry and mission efforts (\$5 million over two years), and 2) to provide approximately half of the cost of the building expansion (\$5 million over two years). We anticipate that, as **Because iT Matters** comes to a close in December 2025, we will have another generosity initiative coinciding with dedication of our new facilities to help the congregation pay down the mortgage as quickly as possible.

## When do I begin giving to Because iT Matters?

We are inviting you to bring your initial gift to the December 3, 2023, Celebration Weekend worship. It is our prayer that this weekend offering would be the largest single weekend offering St. Paul's/The Bridge has ever experienced.

## How do I give to Because iT Matters?

Because this is a "one-commitment" initiative, every gift you give over the next two years will be part of your **Because iT Matters** offering.

You will be able to designate your gifts as you do now for Mission and Ministry, Building Fund, Wisconsin Synod missions, Wisconsin Lutheran High School, or our various other funds.

Currently our Mission and Ministry Fund offerings are used to complete our annual commitment to the synod and high school. Going forward Mission and Ministry Fund offerings beyond what is budgeted for on-campus and off-campus ministry will be placed into the building fund.

## How long is my commitment?

We are asking that everyone make a two-year commitment from January 2024 through December 2025. Your initial gift at our December 3, 2023, Celebration Sunday can also be included in that two-year commitment. For tax purposes, you may choose to spread your commitments over four calendar years, from December 2023 – January 2026.

## Does my commitment include what I normally give?

Yes. As you consider your commitment, you'll want to factor in what you normally give on a weekly or monthly basis and then add in your expanded giving to the **Because it Matters** generosity initiative.

# QUESTIONS

- Regarding our ministry plans, our mission commitments, and our future plans, contact one of the pastors.

### Pastor Panitzke

414.422.0320, ext 122  
ppantizke@stpaulmuskego.org

### Pastor Kuehl

414.422.0320, ext 121  
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### Pastor Bonack

414.422.0320, ext 119  
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- To make a gift of stock, IRA or other assets, contact our Church Administrator.

### Randy Fink

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rfink@stpmuskego.org

## Let Jesus Be All that Remains

By Mike Westendorf

1. I was born empty, with no light inside me  
I was a captive to sin  
Thru the Cross, and the grave,  
O Lord you made the way  
For all of our lives to begin  
O How great the Father's love  
To be called a child of God  
(and that is who we are)

### Chorus

Hallelujah you give us life  
Our Redemption, your sacrifice  
Before your throne all crowns will fall  
My time my gifts my life my all  
In the end you take it all away  
Let Jesus be all that remains

2. My sin and your mercy, is always before me  
With humble hearts we bow  
Your grace is my joy, there's no fear to annoy  
With hands lifted high we shout  
To the one who was and is to come  
To Jesus Christ God's only Son  
(and that is who you are)

### Chorus

Hallelujah you give us life  
Our Redemption, your sacrifice  
Before your throne all crowns will fall  
My time my gifts my life my all  
In the end you take it all away  
Let Jesus be all that remains

### Bridge

You made yourself nothing  
Took on our shame  
Paid all our debts  
that we could be free  
Let me become nothing  
Christ would be everything  
So that all people  
Around me would see (repeat full Bridge x1)  
That Jesus Christ is Lord  
To the Glory of our God (Philippians 2:5-11)

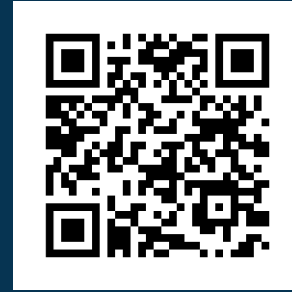
### Final Chorus

Hallelujah you give us life  
Our Redemption, your sacrifice  
Before your throne all crowns will fall  
My time my gifts my life my all  
In the end we give you all our praise  
Let Jesus be all that remains  
Let Jesus be all that remains  
Let Jesus be all that remains

# BECAUSE MATTERS



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Information



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